



TO THE
F R E E M E N,

Of the City of H E R E F O R D.

Friends, Neighbours, and Fellow Citizens.



S I lately Endeavour'd to give you the best Advice I could, to avoid the Poisonous Baits that were laid for your Eternal Ruin, so give me leave now to rejoyce with you on the late glorious Victory you have gained over Corruption and Perjury, in the Defence of your Liberties, and from a just Resentment of the Insult offer'd to your God.

I could never indeed doubt that a great Majority of the Substantial Part of the City would rise above all Temptations, and Vote for such Gentlemen as would Endeavour to Protect Trade, reduce Taxes, and prevent the Exportation of Wool; a Practice of the worst Consequence to this Nation, tho' hitherto little discouraged, and scarce thought worthy the Notice of Parliament. Those who had considerable Properties themselves, were Sensible that the Interest of the Country Gentlemen was the same with their Own, and therefore Voted for such Gentlemen as they had reason to think would preserve their Properties, and not strive to increase their own Incomes at the Expence of the Publick.

But how can we enough commend those poor honest worthy Men, who in these terrible Times of Scarcity when they had hardly Bread to Eat, resisted all Temptations, preferr'd a Good Conscience before larger Sums than they perhaps had ever Seen, or could hope to See, and scorn'd to sell their Souls, even at the highest Rate. With what Pleasure I observ'd these our good deserving Fellow Citizens however mean in outward Appearance, yet rich in Integrity, Smiling with a cheerful Innocence, and going up to take the Oath with an honest and becoming Assurance, such as naturally arises from a quiet Mind. While amongst Those of the Other Side, We might easily Observe a Gloom of Countenance, expressing an inward Disorder of Soul, and often a Trembling all over the Body. These, tho' Signs of Guilt were Proofs that the poor Creatures were not quite lost to all Sense of Shame; But some advanced in so insolent a Manner as shewed they little regarded the Oath, or that God whom they had called to Witness. These had either their Consciences Surfeited with Liquor, or lulled asleep by some cate-harden'd Catuists, who had explained away the Oath, and are therefore far more blameable than the poor Ignorant Wretches they have deluded; For which when they can no longer trifle with Oaths, they must answer to an all-discerning God. As such Men must be for ever despised by every Man of Honour, So those honest Hearts that stood firm in the Day of Tryal, (how poor soever they may be) will be regarded here by all Men of Religion or common Honesty, will escape the fiery Tryal prepared for impenitent Sinners, and enter at last into the Joy of their Lord.

As to such of You as have taken the Money and Voted on the other Side, You cannot I suppose, by the Nicest Casuists be charged with Perjury, Since You cannot be said to have taken Money to Vote for the Persons whom you Voted against. You are indeed greatly blamed by some People, who would not have blamed you at all if you had Voted on their Side and been Perjured. According to the Old Proverb, *To deceive the Deceiver is no Deceit*; And the worst that can be said of you is, that from no unreasonable Repentment, You have deceived those of their Money, who would have tricked you out of your Salvation. You need not trouble yourselves about the Notes You gave for the Money, since the Gentlemen are resolved to defend you against them. A Person late in Authority was pleased to say, there was no Natural Interest in *Hereford* but Money; which is as much as to say, 'tis natural for his Fellow Citizens to be Perjured: An extraordinary Complement, for which Few will thank him. However, thanks to Almighty God, He is now convinced, and has lived to see the Natural Interest carry it against Money. For whatever was pretended of Money's being given on the other Side must fall to the ground of course, since there was not the least Attempt to prove it. Whereas Bribery was proved on the Court Candidates beyond all Dispute from the Money's being actually produced in Publick by several of the Receivers.

I must now apply my self to such of you as took the Oath and the Money. I am apt to think the Money you have receiv'd is by this time almost, if not quite spent, so shall take leave to ask you in the Words of the Apostle; *What Fruit have ye in those things whereof ye are now Asham'd? For the End of those things is Death.* And tho' God in his infinite Mercy hath not Punished you with immediate Death of the Body, as he hath done by several whole Crimes are far short of yours; Yet you may depend upon it, if you do not Speedily and Sincerely repent of this damnable Sin of Perjury, you will Suffer Eternal Death in the Ruin of your Souls which our blessed Saviour Redeemed with his precious Blood. Alas! my poor misled Brethren, how Wretchedly have you returned that inestimable Benefit! If a Man should not only affirm, but swear to any of your Faces, a Thing which you know to be absolutely false, would not you think such a Fellow lost to all Sense of Shame? What Opinion then must the all-knowing God, who tryeth the very Hearts and Reins, have of you, Who insolently Swore by his Name, and called Him to Witness a Thing which not only He, but you your selves knew to be as absolutely false as he is true? When you repeated the Words, *So Help me GOD*; Did you not consider that as you had taken the Money, You by those Words deprived your selves of his Help and Protection in this World, as well as of Eternal Salvation in the next. And what a mean Opinion must you have of that Almighty God who created and redeem'd you, to imagine he could be as easily imposed upon by you, as you have been deluded by your weak and wicked Advisers.

These notable Casuists have try'd to persuade you that you could not be Perjur'd, because the Money was not given you for your Votes, but only lent you. But pray let me ask you, Do you ever design to repay this Money? And when you gave Notes for it, Did you then believe that They to whom you gave those Notes would ever ask you for it again? Nay, did they not Promise you they would not expect it, provided you gave your Votes to their Friends? Do you think they would have lent you the Money at that time had not it not been upon that Account? And can you Suppose, when they lent you the Money, they did not expect your Votes in return? These are plain Questions, to which if you cannot give a plain and honest Answer you must own your selves Perjur'd, Since the Words of the Oath are, that you have not directly

or indirectly taken or had by your self or any other Person any Sum or Sums of Money for your Vote: And I am sure, this sort of borrowing is so indirect a Way of taking the Money, that tis plain to any Honest Man of Common Sense you are directly forsworn; As you also are, if your Wives took it for you, whatever these Casuists may affirm to the contrary.

As I have often mentioned the Word Casuist, it may not be improper in some Measure, to explain it to you. A Casuist (at least such as you have had to deal with) is like a Creature commonly called a Bite, who will tell you a very great Lye with a very grave Face; He is like a knavish Horse-Jockey who will swear a founderd Jade is perfectly sound, when he has scarce a Leg to stand on: He is a sort of Mountebank Doctor, who pretends to cure all Distempers in the Conscience, but, like a Knavish Tinker, makes at least as many Holes as he mends, and his Patients are very apt to die by the Hands of the Common Executioner. If you are guilty of Murder, Theft, Perjury, or any heinous Crime, one of these Casuists will at first persuade you that it is but a small Fault, and by degrees convince you that 'tis no Fault at all: He will argue so long, that he will even seem to be convinced himself; And being inured to Falshood, has seldom Sincerity enough even for a Death-bed Repentance, but generally dies in the most dreadful Agonies of Despair.

Such, alas! are your Advisers; on whom if you continue to rely, you will be in the same case with *Hezekiah* in trusting to *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, who is compared to a broken *Reed*, that would wound the Hand in the same manner as these Wretches will your Souls. What need had these Fellows to Advise you to rear those Papers which were put into your Hands before the Election, if the Things contained in them had been false? Truth can bear the Strictest Search; and their not Suffering you to read it in those printed Papers was a plain Proof that they had told you nothing but Lyes themselves. Those Papers were chiefly intended to convince you, that there was a God, and a Day of Judgement, when Honesty would be rewarded, and Perjury Punish'd; none of which it was for their Interest to have you believe.

As the Methods these People have taken are entirely inconsistent with the Laws of God, so they tend toward destroying all Faith and Confidence among Man. In your dealings with your Fellow Citizens, can you trust a Man upon his Word; whom you cannot believe upon his Oath? Can you imagine he will prove true to you, when he has been false to his God? Who cares to deal with Folks tainted with Perjury? 'Tis even dangerous to speak to them.

I heard some of you cry out at the Election, No Popery; No Pretender! But I must tell you, you must look for their Friends amongst your Advisers, among those who tell you, you are not forsworn, when your own Consciences convince you that you are. Can they pretend to be Friends to King *GEORGE*, who make a Jest of Oaths? Or can we expect that more Regard will be paid to the Abjuration Oath than to all Others? Nay, I will venture to say, that single Oath hath been a greater Security to his Majesty's Crown than the standing Army; and is the best Pledge for keeping that Army steady in his Interest. And as to Popery, 'tis very well known, the Protestants charge the Church of *Rome* with putting a false Sense upon Words and Oaths; A Thing which We disdain, and your Advisers Practice.

Much stress has been laid upon Gentlemens using Threats to deprive People of their Custom; This has been branded as a Crime even equal to Perjury, when practised on One side, tho' scarce allow'd to be any at all on the Other. And

I will undertake to prove, that People were actually turned off from their Business on the Court Side before they were once threaten'd by the Country Gentlemen. I could wish nothing of that Nature had been done on either Side; But if it is used on One Side, it must be on the Other, Otherwise the One will have a great Advantage over the Other. If no Money had been given the Country Gentlemen would have had no Occasion of Threats: Love and Gratitude in the People would have done their Business; there would have been no Occasion of any thing else, since they that spend their Estates among them would be best intitled to their Votes.

'Tis said the Court Candidates designed every thing for your Good, tho' I hope 'twill be allow'd that damning People cannot be for their Good: But it seems, they were to have prevented the Four Shillings Duty upon Cyder, and to have kept off Soldiers from the Town. The Number of Members of Parliament sent up from this whole County amount to no more than Eight; Let any unprejudiced Person cast his Eye over the List of Members for the Western Counties, And as great Quantities of Cyder are made in those Counties, let him Judge whether it be out of regard to *Herefordshire*, or *Devonshire* and *Cornwal*, that the Duty was not long ago levy'd: And if it should be raised here it might be justly thought hard if the West of *England* should not pay it's Share. And as to Soldiers, 'tis well known all Officers are fond of being quarter'd at *Hereford*, and that we were never free from them when Mr. *Westphaling's* Father was Member for the City; So that these Notions are as groundleis as those in behalf of Perjury. And surely, You cannot be so weak as to imagine, that Placemen will ever lessen Taxes: No; More Places produce more Taxes, and more Taxes require more Placemen; So that the Consequence of chusing Members who either have or will attempt to get Places, will not be only our paying Four Shillings in the pound, but, as the Address from the Town of *Totness* in *Devonshire* expresses it, be the ready way toward our paying the other Sixteen too.

As I persuade my Self, that Few of you would have taken the Money but on account of the great Scarcity, and hardly any of you, if you had not been misled by false Friends; All that I can Advise you is, to confess your Crimes both to GOD and Man, and to inform us who these evil Advisers are, that like *Judas* have betray'd both You and their Master. By these means you will Enable us to prosecute them, and avoid being prosecuted yourselves; You will be reconciled to your old Friends and Customers; and upon a Sincere Repentance, and humbly imploring the Divine Mercy, may obtain your Pardon from that Almighty God, whom You have so grievously Offended; But who hath been pleased of his infinite Goodness to declare that, *He desireth not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should turn from his Wick'dness and live.*

I Am,

Your Sincere Friend and Well-wisher,

